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I also certify that the application is now proceeding in the name as identified herein.

I also certify that the attached copy of the request for grant of a Patent (Form 1/77) bears an amendment, effected by this office, following a request by the applicant and agreed to by the Comptroller-General

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Dated 9 December 2004

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GB0325775.5

By virtue of a direction given under Section 30 of the Patents Act 1977, the application is proceeding in the name of

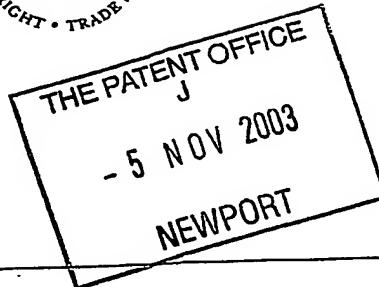
STERITROX LIMITED,
Cromwell Road,
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United Kingdom

Incorporated in the United Kingdom

[ADP No. 08909053001]

05NOV03 E849629-1 817867
P01/7700 0.00-0323775.5**Request for grant of a patent**

(See the notes on the back of this form. You can also get an explanatory leaflet from the Patent Office to help you fill in this form)



The Patent Office

 Cardiff Road
 Newport
 South Wales
 NP10 8QQ
1. Your reference

AM/VWASH/03

2. Patent application number

(The Patent Office will fill this part in)

0325775.5

5/11/03

3. Full name, address and postcode of the or of each applicant (underline all surnames)

ALAN MOLE

LABURNUM GATES

STATION RD

ECKINGTON

PEASEBROOK WR10 3BB

7037765002

SECTION 30 (STATION RD)
ECKINGTON
PEASEBROOK WR10 3BB
70377650024. Title of the invention

PRODUCE DECONTAMINATION DEVICE

5. Name of your agent (if you have one)

"Address for service" in the United Kingdom to which all correspondence should be sent (including the postcode)

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 AB
 5/11/7
 1/7/04

Patents ADP number (if you know it)

7037765003

Priority application number
(if you know it)Date of filing
(day / month / year)6. Priority: Complete this section if you are declaring priority from one or more earlier patent applications, filed in the last 12 months.

Country

Priority application number

Date of filing

7. Divisionals, etc: Complete this section only if this application is a divisional application or resulted from an entitlement dispute (see note f)Number of earlier UK application
(day / month / year)8. Is a Patents Form 7/77 (Statement of inventorship and of right to grant of a patent) required in support of this request?

No

Answer YES if:

- any applicant named in part 3 is not an inventor, or
- there is an inventor who is not named as an applicant, or
- any named applicant is a corporate body.

Otherwise answer NO (See note d)

Patents Form 1/77

Accompanying documents: A patent application just include a description of the invention.
Not counting duplicates, please enter the number of pages of each item accompanying this form:

Continuation sheets of this form *n/a*

Description	<i>2</i>
Claim(s)	<i>1</i>
Abstract	<i>1</i>
Drawing(s)	<i>1</i>

QJ

10. If you are also filing any of the following, state how many against each item.

Priority documents

Translations of priority documents

Statement of inventorship and right to grant of a patent (Patents Form 7/77)

Request for a preliminary examination and search (Patents Form 9/77)

Request for a substantive examination (Patents Form 10/77)

Any other documents (please specify)

11. I/we request the grant of a patent on the basis of this application.

Signature(s) *A. Mee*

Date *4.11.03*

12. Name, daytime telephone number and e-mail address, if any, of person to contact in the United Kingdom

*ALAN MOE alancm99@yahoo.co.uk
01386 750284*

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Notes

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Produce Decontamination Device

Produce decontamination by free radical washing.

According to the present invention there is a device utilising electronically generated free radicals in the presence of non condensing humidity applied to typically but not restricted to fresh produce such as salad products or herbs presented upon a moving belt within a partially enclosed chamber.

BACKGROUND

Traditionally, fresh produce post harvest is washed with a solution containing a biocide such as chlorine or chlorine dioxide, or ozone or any number of combinations of chemicals, with the express aim of reducing or removing potentially damaging or pathogenic microorganisms.

The use of chemicals within the food chain is now less acceptable than hitherto, and many chemical biocides are now proscribed or severely limited by legislation.

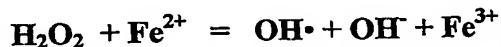
Traditional sanitisation or decontamination uses vast quantities of water; the present invention is designed to use only minimal quantities of water.

PRINCIPLE

The present invention uses only air and potable water to create an environment rich in free radicals such as hydroxyl radicals (OH^\bullet , OH^-) and singlet Oxygen (O^\bullet). These radicals are very powerful oxidising agents, indiscriminate in activity but powerfully biocidal; therefore require accurate and effective control systems for use in a decontamination device. For applications requiring extra decontamination activity the invention incorporates a mechanism for introducing ferric ions into the water supplying the humidity, thereby utilising the well-known phenomenon of Fenton's Reaction. The volume of water necessary to create the required conditions is restricted by design to two to four litres per hour per sprayhead. This means that a chamber containing say twenty sprayheads will use no more than 80 litres of water per hour. Such a chamber could typically decontaminate several hundred kilograms of produce in that time, compare with typically a traditional herb washing plant using 3000 litres of chlorinated water per 500 kg per hour.

Fenton's Reaction and Ozone

Ozone in solution breaks down rapidly to form hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2), which then forms the peroxide radical HO-OH, then two hydroxyl radicals OH^\bullet and OH^- . The rate of conversion from hydrogen peroxide to hydroxyl radical can be greatly enhanced in the presence of ferric ions, acting as a form of catalyst in their conversion to ferrous ions, according to the formula:



The surface of any produce being treated is exposed to the spray containing ferric ions, which coats the surface of the produce with a few microns of water, this is then immediately exposed to the ozone-containing spray which ensures the free radical generation is strongest on the surface, where the two sprays combine.

Description

According to the present invention, and with reference to the accompanying diagram, a chamber (12) is constructed incorporating two conveyor devices (8a and 8b) set and aligned to provide partial superimposition one above the other. Above both conveyors and vertically between them, (at the point of superimposition) is provided a series of sprayheads (5), producing a fine mist of water droplets of a size between 1 and 15 microns, with an average size of 5 microns. The arrangement of these sprayheads is such that the water droplets issued will form a dense layer extending upwards so far as is necessary to ensure that any product on

Produce Decontamination Device

the conveyor is immersed in the layer. Alternate sprayheads provide first ozonised water and the second, water with ferric ions and so on, repeated for the length of the conveyors and vertical drop sprayheads (6).

Superimposed above the sprayheads is a group of waterproof fluorescent tubes (2) producing ultraviolet (UV) light at wavelengths of 185 and 253.7 nanometres. The internal surfaces of the chamber (12) are coated with a compound containing titanium oxides and dioxides. The lower of the two conveyors (8b) incorporates a mechanism (7) to enable the raising or lowering of the conveyor in relation to the upper conveyor. The sprayheads and fluorescent tubes are fitted to enable a constant relationship with the conveyor whatever conveyor position is set.

Further fluorescent tubes (3) of similar specification are located within the chamber to ensure that all surfaces of product are at some point exposed to the light emitted.

The water supplying the sprayheads (5) is provided from reservoirs (4) containing pumps (13,16) to feed the sprayheads (5) at the appropriate pressure to ensure proper atomisation. The water supply from the pump (3) passes through a venturi (15) or similar device for introducing ozone gas under pressure from an ozone generator (14) to create an ozone concentration in the water of 1-5 parts per million. The water supply from the pump (16) may be charged with a sufficient dose of ferric salts such as Ferric sulphate towards a final concentration of typically, but not restricted to, 10 to 15 parts per million. The sprayheads are arranged so that the first sprays a solution of ferric ions, the second a solution of ozone and so on for the length of the conveyors.

Operation of the device.

In operation, produce is introduced into the chamber through an orifice (9) and on to the conveyor (8a) ozonised water in droplets averaging 5 microns is produced from the sprayheads (5) in a dense layer completely enveloping the produce on the conveyor. The ozone rapidly breaks down in the presence of the light from the fluorescent tubes (2) at 253.7 nanometres to produce free radicals and hydrogen peroxide which then breaks down in the presence of ferric ions from the alternate sprayheads (5a) to produce hydroxyl radicals.

The produce moves through the chamber (12) at a rate that may be controlled by varying the speed of the conveyors (8a and 8b). On reaching the end of conveyor (8a) the produce then drops for a variable distance (7) according to the preset height of conveyor (8b). As the produce falls the vertical sprayheads (6) ensure that all surfaces are covered with spray and exposed to the UV light. Where the produce is robust the distance (7) may be increased up to maximum, where the produce is tender the distance (7) may be reduced by elevating the conveyor (8b) to minimise the physical effects of the drop.

The spray and UV exposure process continues for the length of conveyor (8b). On reaching the end of conveyor (8b) the produce exits the chamber via orifice (10) into a suitable receptacle.

In order to control any off-gases from the device air is drawn from the chamber at (1) and recirculated through the reservoir (4). This creates a slight negative pressure within the chamber (12) to ensure that no off gas can escape as air is drawn in to the chamber at (11).

The internal surfaces of the chamber (12) are coated with catalytic materials based on titanium oxides and dioxides, which catalyse the breakdown of ozone to free radicals in the presence of UV light at 185 and 253.7 nanometres from the fluorescent tubes (3). This ensures that no contamination can build up within the confines of the chamber.

Produce Decontamination Device

Claims

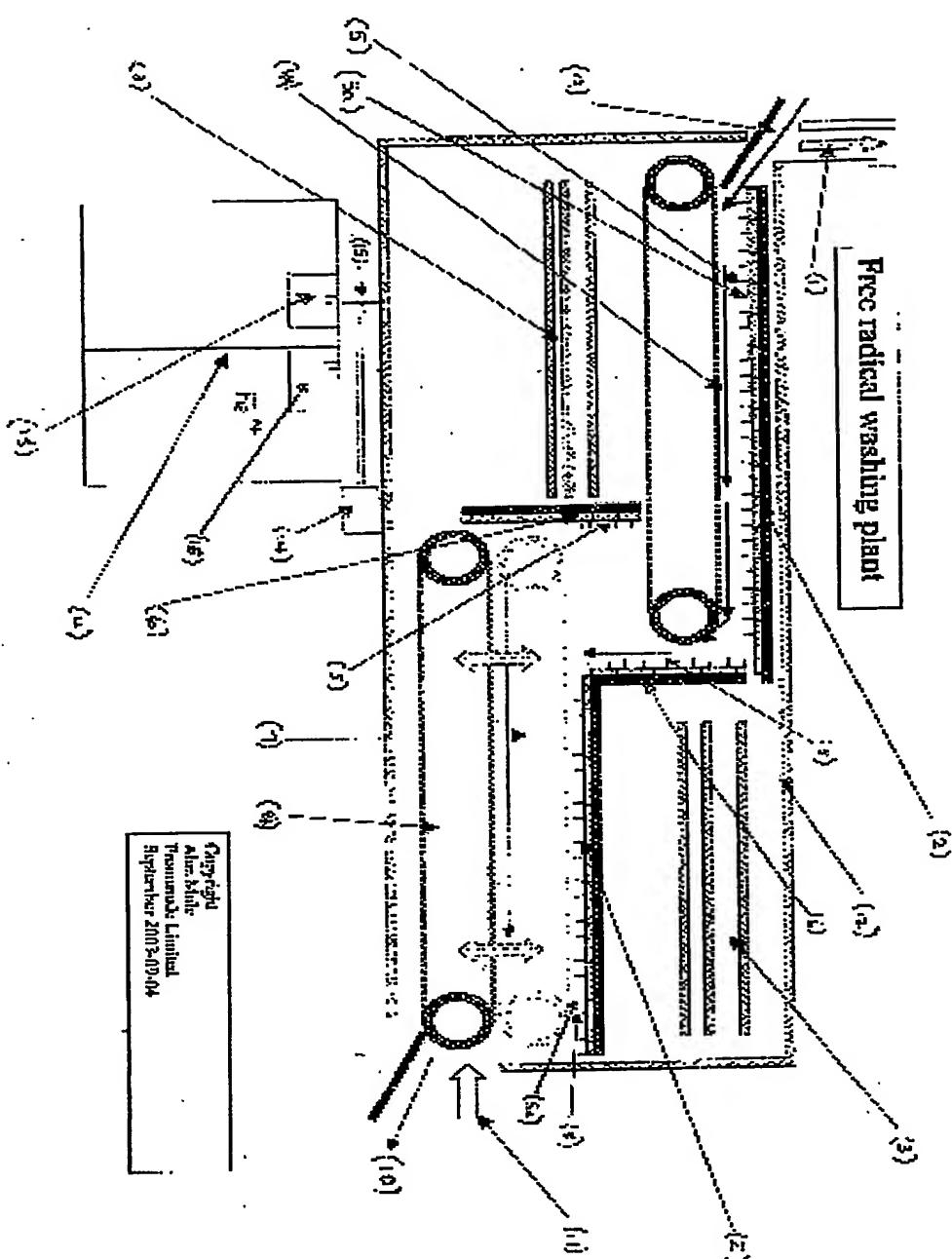
- 1] A device for decontamination of produce utilising free radicals
- 2] A device as in claim one for decontamination of the surface of products
- 3] A device as in claims 1 and 2 where free radicals are generated by the catalytic decomposition of ozone and hydrogen peroxide
- 4] A device as in claims 1 to 3 where the free radical generation is from the catalytic effect of metals and metallic oxides and dioxides in the presence of ultra-violet light and oxygen
- 5] A device as in claims 1 to 4 where free radical generation is by the catalysed decomposition of ozone and hydrogen peroxide in the presence of ultra-violet light.
- 6] A device as in claims 1 to 5 where ozone is provided from a separate proprietary ozone generator
- 7] A device as in claims 1 to 6 where ozone is electrically generated within the water supply by means of pulsed capacitive discharge directly in the water.
- 8] A device as in claims 1 to 7 where hydrogen peroxide is electrically generated within the water supply by means of pulsed capacitive discharge directly in the water
- 9] A device as in claims 1 to 8 where nebulised sprays of water with a particle size not greater than 30 microns are generated within a partially enclosed chamber
- 10] A device as in claims 1 to 9 where nebulised water sprays are dosed with ozone and hydrogen peroxide in solution
- 11] A device as in claims 1 to 10 where nebulised sprays are dosed with a solution of ferric ions from typically but not restricted to ferric sulphate solution
- 12] A device as in claims 1 to 11 where excess ozone is removed by the application of ultra-violet light at the apertures
- 13] A device as in claims 1 to 12 incorporating a moving belt or series of moving belts for conveying products to be decontaminated through a partially enclosed chamber
- 14] A device as in claims 1 to 13 where moving belts may be partially superimposed to create a dropping distance for products surfaces to be wholly decontaminated
- 15] A device as in claims 1 to 14 where the speed of the moving belts may be remotely adjusted by electronic means.
- 16] A device as in claims 1 to 15 which will destroy surface contaminants such as bacteria, viruses, yeasts, moulds, mycoplasmas, protozoa, and pesticides.

Produce Decontamination Device

Abstract

A device for the bulk decontamination of produce and products using electrically generated free radicals within an enclosure, whilst minimising water consumption and using minimal chemicals only as catalysts, with the primary purpose being the destruction of surface contaminants such as bacteria, viruses, moulds, yeasts, protozoa and pesticides.

Produce Decontamination Device



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